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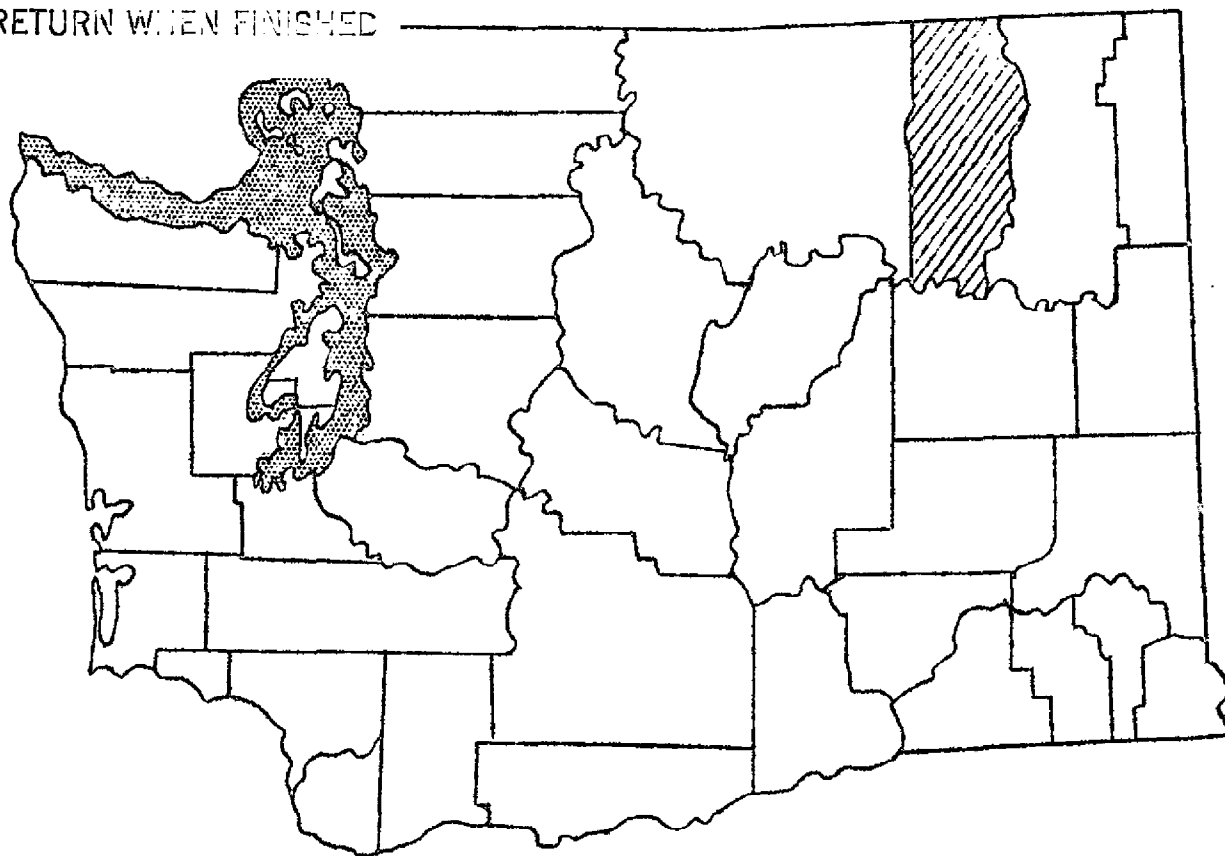
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COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DATA SERIES
1964



WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Joseph D. Dwyer, Director

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Statistical Reporting Service
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WASHINGTON CROP AND LIVESTOCK REPORTING SERVICE
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FOREWORD

This bulletin on Ferry County is one of a second edition series devoted to presenting the history and present nature of agriculture in each of the thirty-nine counties of the State of Washington. The original series was initiated in 1956 by the Washington State Department of Agriculture. State funds were matched by moneys from the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

County agricultural data books are intended to serve a variety of needs. Continually changing conditions in a dynamic state such as Washington require constant planning by groups and individuals, especially in the field of marketing agricultural products. Knowledge of land resources, population and agricultural-economic trends in a local area such as Ferry County is of great value. This book will be useful for reference in public and private instruction by social studies teachers. It has been devised also to inform adults interested in knowing more about their immediate area.

Selected geographic facts, agricultural history, population trends and statistical data are included to give an overall appreciation of Ferry County. Enumerations of the United States Censuses of Population and Agriculture are summarized to give a perspective of development since the establishment of Ferry County in 1899. Facts on topography, soil, climate and forest which influence farming are integrated from surveys and reports of government agencies. Estimates of leading crops by years since 1939 by the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service provide a measure of the trend in the agriculture of the county farm industry.

Acknowledgment is accorded the professional work of several persons. Immediate direction was under Emery C. Wilcox, Agricultural Statistician in Charge, Field Operations Division, Statistical Reporting Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Research involved in up-dating and revising the original information and the preparation of the manuscript of the second edition of the Ferry County bulletin were performed by George K. Saito, Research Analyst, Washington State Department of Agriculture. Editing of the first draft of the present bulletin was done by Emery C. Wilcox. Agricultural Statisticians of the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service gave valuable assistance. Margaret B. Quiroga, Washington State Department of Agriculture, typed all of the textual and tabular material and prepared the graphs. The bulletins were reproduced and assembled by members of the clerical staff of the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

Olympia, Washington
February 1, 1965

J. D. Dwyer, Director
Washington State Department of Agriculture

Funds for this bulletin provided by the Washington State Department of Agriculture were matched by the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

PART I

HISTORY OF FERRY COUNTY AGRICULTURE

Introduction

Ferry County is located in northeastern Washington bordering Canada. The Columbia and Kettle Rivers neatly define the county's eastern and southern boundaries. To the west lies Okanogan County. Ferry County, a land of Okanogan highlands and valleys, supports an expanding agricultural economy based primarily on livestock, forest products and forage crops.

With an area of 2,259 square miles (approximately 1,445,760 acres), Ferry is ninth in size among the 39 Washington counties. The county is approximately 90 miles long north to south and about 35 miles wide from east to west. According to the 1959 Census of Agriculture, about 21 percent of the county was in farms and around 1.4 percent or 19,519 acres was in harvested croplands. Over 80 percent of the county is in forests but a sizable portion of the woodland is pastured. Topography and climate restrict the number and acreage of crops in the county. Crops, however, when added to the local livestock industry and farm forestry, make agriculture a major segment of the total economic resource base of Ferry County. Since the early part of the last century, settlers of varied origins and nationalities have been engaged in both part-time and full-time farm activities. The economic history has been characterized by a steady growth of agriculture along with employment in the forest products industry, mining and service trades.

History 1/

Early frontier agriculture in the area now occupied by Ferry County was practiced by fur traders and missionaries in the lower Kettle River Valley at its juncture with the Columbia River. As early as 1816 the Hudson Bay Fur Company introduced subsistence farming and gardening in the region at Fort Colville which was located near Kettle Falls in present Stevens County. In 1826, Angus McDonald of the Hudson Bay Fur Company introduced cattle into the Kettle River Valley. Father Anthony Ravalli, a Jesuit missionary, arrived in the upper Colville River and Kettle River Valleys in 1846 and established St. Paul's Mission. Ravalli taught the Colville Indians some of the rudiments of gardening and livestock raising.

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Territorial disputes between the United States and Great Britain kept settlement of Ferry County to a minimum prior to the mid-1840's. The treaty of 1846 established the present Canadian boundary and ended British claims to all lands to the south. Immigration into the area also was retarded by Indian hostility until a treaty was made with the Spokane, Colville and Nespelem Indians by the U. S. Army in 1858. Indian land rights and homesteading rights of the white men in Ferry County were not entirely clarified and established until the Colville Indian Reservation was created covering the southern part of the county in 1872. White settlement in the area was further restricted when the Colville National Forest was established in 1907 covering most of northern Ferry County.

Ferry County's present, general livestock farming pattern began with the development of gold and silver mining in the Okanogan Highlands around the 1890's. In 1896, John Welty discovered gold and silver in the area near the present site of Republic. An influx of miners followed and the Republic mining district developed into one of the main mining areas of Washington. Other mineral discoveries were made in the Kettle River Valley. Mining towns and camps sprang up in the area. These included the present towns of Orient, Boyds and Republic. Agriculture in the valleys was stimulated by the mining population which created a good local market for farm goods. Remoteness of the mining activities from already established farm areas was a factor in the rapid development of local agriculture. Local trade in beef, mutton, pork, bacon, milk, butter, potatoes, wheat and hay caused an expansion of commercial farming. Indians on the Colville Reservation also developed a good trade in horses and cattle.

On February 21, 1899, the Washington Legislature created Ferry County from the western portion of older Stevens County. The new county was named in honor of Elisha P. Ferry, the first Governor of the State of Washington. The county seat was established at Republic. At the time of its creation, northern Ferry County was one of the most active mining regions of eastern Washington. In 1900, the Census counted 4,562 persons in the county.

Early Ferry County agriculture was devoted mostly to livestock and the raising of feed crops. Local farmers sought markets outside the immediate area. Livestock were driven over trails and roads to railheads and livestock yards in Spokane, Colville, Davenport and Wilbur. The Columbia River also was used to ship Ferry County livestock to outside markets. Sanpoil and Kettle Valley livestockmen also were able to move some cattle northward into the mining camps of British Columbia at Grand Forks and Trail.

1/ This historical summary has been derived from the following four sources:

- (1) Ben Burgunder, "Recollections of the Inland Empire". The Washington Historical Quarterly, Washington Historical Society. Vol. 17, pp 190-210, April 1926. Published by University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- (2) Washington State Associations of County Commissioners and Engineers in cooperation with the State College of Washington, The Book of the Counties, 1953, Yearbook. See section for Ferry County, pp. 98-100, prepared by E. O. Bendixen, 1953.
- (3) Washington State Historical Society, Washington, A Guide to the Evergreen State (Revised 1950). See pages 453-459, 78-79. Metropolitan Press, Portland, Oregon, 1950.
- (4) Richard M. Perry, "The Counties of Washington". Secretary of State, State of Washington, Olympia, 1943 (mimeographed). See section on Ferry County.

In 1902, Ferry County's agricultural marketing was greatly improved with the completion of a Great Northern Railway branch line which connected Republic with the Canadian Pacific Railway at Grand Forks in British Columbia. A Great Northern Railway branch line was built up the region's Colville and Kettle Rivers providing Ferry County a good access route to the Spokane market area.

Before 1920, customs duties of Canada and the United States were relatively low and an important trade developed across Ferry County's Canadian border. Livestock and perishable produce were shipped over the international boundary. United States Customs established three ports of entry on the Ferry County border--Laurier, Danville and Ferry.

By 1935, mining activities in the county were on a downward trend but the area's economy was strengthened by the Grand Coulee Project undertaken by the federal government. Between 1930 and 1940, many Ferry County residents were employed at the construction site of Grand Coulee Dam and in clearing and removing property from areas to be inundated by the creation of Roosevelt Lake behind the dam. When the dam was completed, considerable crop and grazing land was flooded on the Ferry County shore of the large reservoir. The villages of Keller, Inchelium and Boyds were moved to higher ground. Properties were bought out and new roads and railroads were constructed as a result of the reservoir. Construction activity and market opportunities related to the Grand Coulee Project were an important stimulus to the growth of Ferry County's livestock and dairy industry.

Since 1935, much progress has been made in the rural area development of Ferry County. The Colville National Forest has been developed for multiple use in timber management, grazing and recreation. The U. S. Department of Interior has carried out a program of improving the conditions in the Colville Indian Reservation. Roosevelt Lake has been developed for recreation. State and county roads have been vastly improved. An important field of progress has been in rural electrification by Public Utility District One of Ferry County. Improved game management by the state has increased the number of hunters and fishermen visiting Ferry County.

The present farm economy of Ferry County is based largely on livestock, farm forestry and feed crops. The value of all farm products sold from Ferry County farms increased greatly from 1940 when it was worth \$434,629 to \$1,066,056 in 1949 and \$1,327,441 in 1959. The use of upland grazing areas and fertile valley lands have been improved through group work and programs devoted to animal husbandry and grassland management. Guidance and leadership along these lines have come from numerous successful livestockmen and from private associations and public agencies. The Washington Cattlemen's Association and the Washington Wool Grower's Association have contributed much to Ferry County's livestock industry. Research carried on by the Experiment Station of the Washington State University has been of considerable aid to the area's livestock and crop management and production. Rangeland management has been performed by the U. S. Forest Service in Colville National Forest while elsewhere in the county, soil conservation and management practices have been guided by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service. The County Agent of the Extension Service has proved valuable in the over all development and improvement of Ferry County's agriculture.

Table 1. Ferry County's Rank Compared With
Other Washington Counties, 1959

Item Compared	Rank	Quantity
<u>General</u>		
Land area	9	1,406,080 acres
Number of farms	35	283 farms
Land in farms-percent	22	21.2 percent
Average size of farms	9	1053.9 acres
Cropland harvested	27	19,519 acres
Irrigated land in farms	28	2,598 acres
Rural farm population	35	797 persons ^{1/}
Total county population	36	3,889 persons ^{1/}
<u>Cash farm income</u>		
Value of all farm products sold	34	1,327,441 dollars ^{1/}
Value of livestock sold	33	931,057 dollars
Value of crops sold	33	396,384 dollars
<u>Livestock on farms</u>		
All cattle and calves	26	15,097 head
Milk cows	37	390 head
Hogs	27	1,365 head
Chickens	36	7,547 birds
Horses and mules	20	858 head
Sheep and lambs	23	1,742 head
<u>Dairy and poultry products sold</u>		
Value of dairy products sold ...	36	15,997 dollars
Whole milk sold	36	288,328 pounds
Value of poultry products sold .	39	12,856 dollars
Chickens sold	38	2,109 birds
Eggs sold	39	33,217 dozen
<u>Important crops harvested</u>		
Alfalfa	12	9,777 acres
Clover-timothy	25	1,781 acres
Small grains for hay	3	3,050 acres

^{1/} U. S. Census of Population, 1960.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1959.